Learn About Research Skills Through Online Shopping

Teens are savvy online shoppers, which may give you insight into their research skills.

Give students a challenge to find an item with additional criteria such as a budget range, brand name, or arrival date (e.g., find a blue dress for the upcoming school dance that is under $100). Have one student complete the challenge while the partner tracks and records the steps that lead the researching student to complete the challenge. For example, the recorder may make note of the websites, search terms, or use of coupon codes. Have student-researchers share their thought processes out loud to get even more information about the many considerations they made (e.g., I found a dress I liked, but it wasn't from a retailer I knew, so I decided to shop around a bit more).

Review the paths that students took. You may find that students are adept at using Google, but need more work on using targeted search terms or that students use crowdsourcing, but that they don't always know how to critically use that information. Use what you find to create lessons that incorporate needed research skills.

Read about more activities you can use to improve students’ research skills.

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